October 2017

Reminiscenes

REMINISCENCES

In 1887 I received, unsought, thro the kindly offices of my Alma Mater, an appointment to teach in a Washington High School. About the same time the Grimke Family returned to Washington, after a temporary sojourn in Florida, to resume pastorate of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church here. On the Branch, so to speak, for a year they had quarters in transit on Eleventh street in what was then facetiously called "Quality Row," while I made my home with Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Crummell, who were deep in the anxieties of constructing St. Luke's Church at Fifteenth and Church streets, northwest. In spite of absorbing cares and worries of house hunting and home prospecting for permanent anchorage on both sides, even in that first year we met ~~and~~ we knew the meeting to be no chance acquaintanceship. Each saw and realized the"grappling hoops of steel" which clinched and finally stamped with the sacred seal of a permanent friendship the unspoken pledge: Toute ma vie et au dela. The very next year I had planted my little North Carolina colony on Seventeenth street where I immediately began, like the proverbial beaver to build a home, not merely a house to shelter the body, but a home to sustain and refresh the mind, a home where friends foregather for interchange of ideas and agreeable association of sympathetic spirits. The Grimkes also soon had their Lares and Penates comfortably ensconced on Corcoran street, their books and their pictures, their statues and flowering plants, the things they loved and would enjoy all the more by sharing with others of harmonious tastes and congenial minds. From that day till death began his inroads into that circle of kindred spirits, I can safely say not a week passed for thirty years or more that did not mark the blending of those two homes in planned, systematic and enlightening but pleasurable and progressive intercourse of a cultural and highly stimulating kind. The week-ends were something to look forward to, Friday evenings on Corcoran street, Sunday evenings

at 1706 Seventeenth street; and I think if there had been some "She-that-must-be-obeyed" to say to me, "If you don't watch your step you can't go to the Grimkes' this week," I would have fallen into line pronto.

As may be supposed, it took a pretty stiff course of study to hold us so long. The Friday meets we called the Art Club. We never organized, had no officials, no constitution, no dues. Besides our two families and whoever chanced to be visiting either of them, Dr. Blyden, when on this side of the Atlantic, Richard T. Greener, Mrs. Frederick Douglass (we were too dilettante for the Honorable Frederick), Mrs. John R. Francis, Mrs. John H. Smyth,(known locally as "Smythe-Smith"), wife of the Ex-Minister to Liberia, and a few others met there. We drew no color line, in fact I believe we were not conscious of any. Visitors in my home such as Miss Alice M. Bacon of Hampton, Mary Churchill (David Churchill the author), when stopping over Sunday were pleased to meet my friends, the Grimkes, who were always in for music on that evening; likewise the denizens of "1706" had the pleasant privilege of meeting many choice New England spirits at Corcoran street on Fridays.

An amusing incident occurred in connection with the presence of Coleridge-Taylor to conduct his "Wedding of Hiawatha" given by the Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society at Washington. Naturally and as a matter of course, when not busy with rehearsals, he made himself very much at home both with the Corcoran street coterie and with our circle on Seventeenth street. In fact, in a way, I may say I was responsible for his making the trip to Washington, and had to put forth no lion-hunting wiles to have him meet my friends when he came.

It happened this way. In the summer of 1900 I was on the program to speak in Westminster Hall at a Conference in London. Coleridge-Taylor furnished the music for that program, and afterwards he and his

wife invited me to attend as their guest a presentation of Hiawatha in Alexandra Palace, at which time he received the greatest ovation my small-town "colored" experience had ever read or dreamed of. Mrs. Coleridge-Taylor took me at once right to her heart, and immediately began planning to come to "the States." I saw that she was just at the stage of love's lunacy, when you yearn for the sacrificial altar to prove by dying the undying attachment of conjugal devotion. I approved Mr. Taylor's coming but strongly opposed her making the trip with him. She argued. She knew all about the prejudice "over there." She "wouldn't mind it a'tall." She was sure that where Mr. Taylor went she would be only too happy to go. I argued that, however becoming the martyr's crown might be upon her pretty head, her friends should not be subjected to the pain of seeing it there; that what she knew about prejudice on the other side was hearsay, to moil thro it was quite another thing. My argument finally prevailed, and Mr. Taylor came alone to "shed his sweetness" quite generously on "colored" America. Some whites bravely attended the concert given in a "colored" church. The Marine Band rehearsed faithfully under his baton and took orders quite meekly from the little brown Englishman. Not a ripple on the surface. The last goodbyes were said; colored Washington and neighboring boroughs were gloating over the triumph "for the Race," But Mr. White Man rarely gets left for long--that is, if he can get near enough to bribe the conductor and maul the engineer. As a few of us learned afterwards, a committee of "Bokkras" quietly boarded the train at Union Station, rode with Mr. Taylor as far as Philadelphia, brot him back as their guest, and banqueted him at the Shoreham! We were not invited. It was never noted in the papers, and we were left to imagine our friend at the time already en route to his native heath in Bonnie England. When we learned the truth, we had no regrets. Short'nin' bread fills the hungry soul more completely than caviar and

champagne, and what is more to the point it leaves no hangover for the morning after.

I wish I could find in the English language a word to express the zest, the stimulating, eager sense of pleasurable growth of those days--eight to ten P.M. Fridays regularly at Corcoran street, Sundays at "1706" the same hours. The word study (Latin: studere) connotes zealous striving, suggests a teacher, competition, percentage marks, school, and inevitably some sort of promotion or reward of merit card at the end; and there is always an end to that sort of thing. You want it, and work for it, and hope for it. But here was just growth with the sheer joy of growing, conscious, satisfying, complete, each hour of energized happiness sufficient unto itself, expecting no end and desiring none. Like the Tree that looks at God all day and lifts its leafy arms to pray, or the lowly cabbage that roots its way in the luscious bosom of mother earth and does no more than "head up," reveling all the time in the process. Here was activity, planned and purposeful, strenuous but joyous, not hunger-driven animal action to appease wants, rather spirit-driven by the inner spur and need of life--the more abundant life. Perhaps, in the way we went at it we may catch a figure from the war horse, quivering for the fray, with the smell of battle dilating his nostrils, the certainty of conflict sending quickening thrills into his hoofbeats. Or better still, perhaps, the Atlantean swimmer buffeting angry billows with affectionate strokes of leg and arm, rejoicing in the strength of the Universe as he feels it surge thro his tingling veins with every impact of the salt sea waves.

In the old college days my record was far from guiltless of faculty headaches for guiding professors, by reason of my insatiable craving for "more." Faculty business was interrupted to consider the case "of one "Miss" Cooper, who asks permission to carry four subjects when three is the limit under the rules." On one such occasion, when differential

calculus was the fourth pleaded for, Mrs. Johnston, Dean of Women, was asked, as authority on Woman psychology, to explain why this "Miss Cooper person" was clamoring for calculus. Mrs. J., her black eyes snapping, her thin lips drawn to a single line, informed the faculty in her deep sonorous voice that the only explanation she could offer for the phenomenon was , "Calculus is hard, and Mrs. Cooper likes to tackle hard things." That was not the whole story at the time, for I recall that, at a safe distance behind Lady Johnston's back, I retorted that with funds reaching just so far I had to crowd into the time I could pay for such subjects as needed the Professors' help. The "snaps" I could dig out alone. Be that as it may, I had the habit even then of grappling with difficulties and liking it. And I did enjoy my Math.

Two strangers, a bit lonely and quite subdued under the condescending superiority of the "Old Cits" cult at the Nation's Capital, were chatting pleasantly of college days when one remarked that her pet aversion had been Geometry and Mathematics in general. A little hard of hearing, or pretending to be, I asked (for it was Mrs. Grimke) if she had said her "pet diversion." We both laughed and agreed before we parted that we should enjoy reading together for the winter, and we solemnly engaged that it should not be Mathematics. Mrs. Grimke was very fond of Raphael and the Umbrian School of Art. She loved Mrs. Browning and Mrs, Jamieson, and had herself contributed articles on Italian Art. And so it was soon decided we would study Art--not to practice but to enjoy it. How to Judge a Picture, Art for Art's Sake, Taine's Italy, The Ideal in Art, and Lubke--this last, two big volumes, we spent several successive winters on, taking a year's study for Architecture, another for painting, a third for sculpture, and so on; with collateral explanatory readings and talks, collecting scrap albums of things we wanted for keeps, and even picking up here and there plaster casts of classic models such as a three-foot replica of the Venus of

Milo found in Toronto on one of our trips. The Perry Pictures were then obtainable of almost everything mentioned in the Art books and extremely low-priced, clear, and well photographed for mounting. Each of us had an individual book of preferences. Mr. Grimke joined in for the pure recreation of it, and he afterwards admitted seriously that he got a great deal out of it. I believe his favorite master was Michael Angelo, a spirit most akin to his own for stern self discipline and unrelenting devotion to ideal perfection. His chosen masterpiece was Michael Angelo's Moses, which he framed and kept on the wall of his study. As already intimated, our reading was by no means desultory. The author to be studied was usually selected in the summer vacation by a representative appointed in June. The selection was made after several trips to the library and examination of publishers catalogs. The book chosen was purchased by each member and read aloud from cover to cover. As a test of the thoroness of work done, the task of bringing in a list of questions on the topics discussed was alternately assigned, and a field day of quizzing came after the completion of each major topic. A full hour at each meeting was given to the subject in hand, after which small talk and general conversation around Mrs. Grimke's tea table. I think I owe any cultivation I have now in the taste for teas to that acquired at Mrs. Grimke's hospitable board. Prior to my Corcoran street training in the flavors of oolong, Formosa, Salada, and the various India and Chinese brews, I confess the only conscious requirement I demanded was that it should be wet and sweet. Mr. Grimke changed all that, for he was the consummate miracle man who transformed water fresh from the spigot, brought quickly to the first bubble boil, into the brilliant amber-colored nectar that shed the delicate aroma of a tropical forest or a bouquet of tuberoses. He had a three-minute glass that came from Pisa, Italy. It took just so many minutes for its fine sands to flow from the upper to the lower bulb.

Just so long, not a second longer, must the hot water remain on the tea leaves; and when the delighted ohs and ahs from his admiring audience announced that the performance was a complete success, Mrs. Grimke, whose wifely solicitude for her husband's spiritual graces far outweighed her satisfaction in such material achievements, would say, while her eyes all along had registered only the utmost gratification at her man's clearly foreseen triumphs: "Oh, don't inflate his vanity by too much praise. I assure you Frank is quite conscious already of his accomplishments, and indeed proud of the fact that he tops all competitors in the fine art of brewing tea. We shall have to call him the Champion Brewer."

A curious study in psychology, to my mind, is the contrast between Frank Grimke in the innocent, almost boyish, abandon of his home and the austere, almost painful rigidity of Doctor Grimke of the Pulpit. He could joke and take a joke at his own expense, provided, mark you, it did not cut across any "fundamentals" of his Calvinistic postulates. On one occasion, in Toronto, we met a young African prince, Momolu Massaquoi, a fine-looking, upstanding, well educated young man, who lectured on things African and exhibited pottery, basketry, and textiles of native weave. His tribe had a written language and he mentioned once, I recall, that his mother, the favorite wife, could both read and write Arabic and that he himself would succeed his father on the throne. We enjoyed his lecture en costume, a bolt of striped weave over his shoulder and an enormous spear in hand. I was both surprised and charmed at the purity of his English; and Mr. Grimke took delight in boosting the young prince as a great catch. One day Mrs. Grimke came to my room, her eyes dancing with excitement, and informed me that the Prince was in the Parlor and wished to see me. I was not slow in catching her enthusiasm and all a-twitter she helped me into my prettiest frock and waited till everything was in apple-pie order. Ready with my most engaging

smiles, I descended with her. When we entered the spacious parlor, there sat Mr. Grimke, his face somewhat in the shadow, a long flowered curtain draped across his shoulders, a curtain rod a-tilt ready to spear any ferocious beast of the desert, and fairly bursting with laughter over my complete discomfiture.

The tender solicitude with which he cared for Mrs. Grimke and the fond cheerfulness with which he served her slightest wants was beautiful, and to my mind unparalled among the sons of men. She was older by several years than he and always, in the years that I knew them, an invalid. Yet he never tired, never seemed to settle into it as an old, old story. If one inquired after her health, he would answer as if he had never noticed it before: "Why, she isn't at all well today. She is suffering with a dreadful headache." She was always chilly, and we Friday Nighters were sure he kept the house too warm. They had in both front and back parlors those huge latrobes that seemed in those days indigenous to Baltimore and Washington. They burned anthracite coal and Mr. Grimke never allowed them to fall below flaming heat. Once someone slyly remarked, apropos of his wonderful efficiency as a fire tender, that certain philosophers opined that we carry on to perfection in the world to come whatever attainments we have achieved here below. He was quick to see the implication and took good naturedly the joke at his expense. My mental observation was that there was no text of Scripture against it. Not so my Simon of Cyrene. I gave him a copy of the poem, as was always done by any member of "the Club" who broke into print--and most of us did sooner or later. He read my lines thro, thotfully and silently at first. Then he came back over certain verses and fixing me with a disapproving glance he said: "But the Word has it <u>They laid on him the Cross</u>," and he quoted: <u>They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear His Cross</u>. "You make Simon a volunteer," and he read aloud:

Beside the road to Calvsry, a swarthy figure stood;
One Simon of Cyrene, Alone amid the crowd.
His brawny arms knew burdens,
His big broad shoulders bent
To many a loving service A willing lift had lent.
The Man of Sorrows halted;
The man of Service saw
The look of Love, exalted,
Triumphant over law
Of race or class proscription,
Of barriers high and low;
O'er narrowness of vision
That cannot see or know
A brother in the stranger;--
O'er drowsy ears that fail
To hear the needy calling;
O'er "slow of heart" that quail
At union in "One Father"
And kinship in "One blood."
Through all the dreary nothings
That keep mankind apart,
These Two, a look revealing
Shot forth from heart to heart.
Two Spirits met each other
At Nature's tidal flood--
Simon, the man of no caste,
Jesus, the Son of God!"
********** and further,
"The African's broad shoulder
Beneath the Cross was thrust,
That Burden and its Bearer No more shall be accurst.

"We Two went up together! And they who love the Lord
Some day shall call me brother, In mem'ry of His Word."

In defending my point of view I was as illogical, I suppose, as the girl in the play from the Bowery, who had suddenly become a Marchioness. Her mentors kept telling her "That is not the way for a marchioness to behave," and she retorted,"Well, it's the way this marchioness behaves." St. Simon was not pictured in my mind as a slave, dumb driven, as an accidental beast of burden happening at the moment to be caught in the denouement of the greatest Drama of the Universe, but as one elect thruout the Ages to play his part in that Drama when Asia betrayed and Europe crucified--Africa, predestined to come forward humbly and gladly to give Service, the peculiar contribution of "Ethiopia's blameless Race."

It was not my logic but my presumption, I think, that disturbed my friend's orthodox soul. As I argued for my Bill of Rights, including freedom of thot and freedom of expression, he got my tag with an epithet and put a quietus on further argument for that day. "That is pure rationalism," he said, "you are a rationalist." I shut up but did not give up after this bludgeon of name-calling. I secretly bided my time for getting even, which came quite naturally at a Sunday evening gathering of the clans at "1706." The program here was less strenuous than the Art studies at the Grimkes', and bore in general an air of repose befitting the closing hours of the Sabbath day. We used to meet in my study, where there was a second piano, not to disturb or be disturbed by the youngsters of my household, who were frankly "bored" by music not distinctly of their generation. George Eliot says somewhere that we are blessed when our "theater" demands the best that is in us. My piano has always been my most intimate and inseparable chattel. Even in my four years of exile in Missouri my piano, like the homesick woman's "Same old Connecticut Moon," kept bright the sacred home-ties.

In college I had neither the funds nor time to cultivate my love of music, but the Oberlin Conservatory furnished atmosphere, as I have poignant cause to remember. Fate decreed that my entrance exams, under "Tutor" King (afterwards President Henry Churchill King), should direct my trembling fingers, suddenly all thumbs, to draw two parallel planes preliminary to proving a line perpendicular to one was perpendicular to the other, while pianos to the right of me, pianos to the left of me volleyed and thundered. I did manage a few private lessons, however, and was told that taste was a long way ahead of technique, but that in the strictly "pale-blue" shades I had a touch worth cultivating, but I could never hope to do the big bow wows. I had complete editions of the Beethoven Sonatas, Bach albums, the delicious Chopin Preludes, Schumann, Schubert. Mozart, and all of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words. I didn't presume to tackle Wagner beyond the Pilgrims' Chorus and Evening Star of Tannhauser, which I dearly loved, and some bits of the Meistersinger which I worked on faithfully but never quite mastered sufficiently to try out on my "Theater." And now I am going to utter a libel bringing, I fear, quick condemnation on my devoted head. I am glad today that Radio was not invented at the time of my long and patient struggle with classical music. Grateful I am for this miracle of the ages which comes just when I need it and find it to be indispensable. It relieves jaded eyes from poring over newspapers, it furnishes box seats free for Metropolitan Opera and numerous exquisite classical programs by the finest orchestras, from all of which, be it remembered, without Radio, the "segregated," whatever their qualifications, would be excluded by an adamantine American law for the most illiberal of the liberal Arts. So thank God for Radio! It has not yet caught on to the jim crow trick, and it still does the best it can for the aging and for shut-ins and shut-outs. I will not grudge to the young their swing and their jazz. I am glad that by a turn of the wrist I can cut it out. I am wondering if it would not have made me lazy, carefree, and a bit reck-

less if my youth had spent its energies on loose rhythm and commonplace melodies and that "let down" sort of music which lounges on its backbone and bangs the piano for sheer noise and motion. I am just as glad that most of the things I dug out for myself, laboriously and conscientiously because I liked them, have proven in the larger horizons of today worthy of being loved and kept alive by those more capable of judging than I. And I would not exchange the avid zest, the expectant delight with which I worked out for myself the beauty of these treasures, practicing every spare moment for my Grimke "Theater." And the reflected joy of their keen appreciation! For they, too, loved the Masters, knew details of their histories, often offered suggestions of their own impressions interpreting the mood of the music or the emotions aroused in themselves by its rhythmis beauties and elusive harmonies. An Opus of Schumann, I recall, the memory of which has haunted me for years. The album was thumbed to death and passed on to the trash man years ago but, like the Lost Chord, it remains to this day the object of eager expectancy whenever my radio favors me with a Schumann program, hoping the ether may bring it back. Vain hope! Such moments may be once but not twice. It began with arpeggios, sweet and tender, that make you think of Life's innocent childhood, of Mother play and baby songs, perhaps of babbling brooks and green meadows; then, by subtle modulations, the strength of mature life--virile, strenuous, stern, even rough--with crashing chords and harsh dissonances--conflict, hate, tough opposition, violent misunderstanding, hostile, ruthless force, and cruel injustice; then just the barest gleam toward the end of that first simple melody, running like a silken thread of beauty from the unforgettable period of peace and tenderness. A lovely sunset emerging from black storm clouds after a turbulent, unsatisfying day.

Mr. Archibald, always a good listener and a good critic, too, you may be sure, spoke up with a sigh of relief at the finale: "Well, he

got back to some of the old anchorage after all. He had memories that helped. Good to have such a childhood. Life never tarries long by peaceful brooks and flowering vales. Strife, Strain, Stress--these must come, Mountains must be climbed or else tunneled thro. We must be on our way!" And we all of us knew what Archie visioned and the rest of us heard in the Master's outpouring of his tuneful soul.

An occasional solo from the oratorios was the treat offered by the Loves, brother and sister. Mr. love, especially, had a fine baritone voice, and a favorite from him was "O rest in the Lord, Wait Patiently for Him" from Mendelssohn's Elijah. Other much-loved contributions from that side of the house were: "He Shall Feed His Flock," "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," and "Consider the Lilies." We always ended with a few hymns sung by all. Here Dr. Frank was in his element and shone with peculiar impressiveness. It was not so much his voice as the emphasis he put into the words by the deep, sincere feeling that seemed to well up, untaught and spontaneous, from a primitive faith. It always made something stick up in my own throat and I wanted to cry. I didn't dare look around but kept eyes glued to notes and business of piano, so tense were the moments: "Abide With Me," "Jerusalem the Golden," "Now the Day is Over," and always as the signal for closing, "Lead, Kindly Light." After this last, by a Puckish somersault, Mr. Grimke, just to tease, would declaim in sepulchral tones: "Rise, Mrs. Grimke! " Oh, Frank," she would say, "couldn't you keep still just one little moment? Give us time to come down gradually from such heights."

She never sang, at least I never heard her, but sat, her eyes shaded from the glare, her whole being in rapt attention, entranced apparently in pure delight, charmed beyond the power of words. The lively pleasure reflected thruout the company was liberally shared by me except on one unworthy occasion when I was guilty of a vixenish contretemps. It happened not long after the passage of arms over my Simon

of Cyrene. For the Church Hymnal from which I usually played the closing hymn, I had on the piano a Sunday School collection of conventicle hymns for children. "Lead, Kindly Light," was done over in quavers and semi-quavers that gave it a hop, skip, and jump effect not unlike the tempo of rather cheerful jazz. "Why the change?" asked Dr. Grimke in some surprise. "This book is different," I said, showing him the notes. "But can't you play it the way you have always played it?" he asked sharply. "I might," I answered evenly, "but that would be putting my judgment in place of what is plainly written before me," and I gave him a straight look in the eye. He remembered "rationalism" and subsided. I found the old Hymnal, played the dotted half-notes in the well-known tempo, and the meeting adjourned happily as always.

Another incident, the last at "1706" that I shall recount, leaves my conscience even less complaisant in retrospect. Refreshments came always after the program of classical music and before the hymn singing. The evening in question, Mr. Archibald, who was the equal of any Scotland Yard sleuth for uncovering what was hidden or detecting the "perfect crime," blurted out, with malice I commented, just after his brother had complimented Miss Love on the "delicious jelly"--"Yes," said Archie, "this has wine in it." Now I am no wine-bibber, but it would never occur to me that it was sinful to find the flavor of wine agreeable in a dish of jello. I think Lottie would have felt just as I did. Frank was different, not from condemnation of peccadillos in others, but from stern abhorrence of the slightest discrepancy between preaching and practice in himself. Hypocrisy, of all the seven deadly sins, was most hateful in his sight. I have heard remarked by the man in the street, whose path was actually none too straight and avowedly not meant to be narrow: "Grimke is the only man can talk to me like that, and it's because I know he's harder on himself than on the rest of us." Everyone respected even his prejudices, and so when Archie threw his little bomb-

shell into the party I saw my friend had been innocently trapped on a sensitive point. I started lamely to try a little white lying. Truthfully, indeed, I had no direct knowledge of what was in the jelly and I knew our dear Lula who made it was innocent as a new-born babe of intentional wrong-doing. I turned to Mr. Archibald, remarking as casually as I could: "Why, the wine color you see there is the raspberry jello; the yellow is orange or lemon--I am not sure which." Dr. Grimke was acquiescing politely: "Ah, it's really delicious." The indomitable Brother was quivering to hurl a second bolt when, providentially, (I say it reverently) Lula coughed; in fact, she came so distressingly near choking that all thot of jello and its trouble-making wine and raspberries was forgotten andI never afterwards had the courage or the honesty to bring it up again. Mea culpa. I felt that I had hurt something in my friend, and nothing I could say would blot it out. I had never heard Dr. Grimke claim that he never touched wine or that he thot it sinful to do so. He had preached, I know, that "wine is a mocker," a habit-forming taste, and that it is the small beginnings of such an appetite that conceal the danger and should be carefully guarded. I understood this perfectly and condemned myself because, inadvertently, he had been put in the position of innocently admitting a liking for what he conscientiously disapproved. Quand meme-- Notwithstanding the fact that my opinions on the subject had undergone no change whatever, that night marked the last time that jelly in my house could be accused of a suspicious wine flavor.

I mention these differences as establishing one fact, namely: a lasting friendship is not conditioned on identity of views nor dependent on the self-immolation of either personality. Dr. Grimke bore with my "rationalism" quite as graciously, I trust, as I with his fundamentalism. I am Episcopalian, he Presbyterian, neither ever tried to win over the other. We never argued about church dogmas, never discussed theological questions. Annually he preached a Thanksgiving sermon that might be

called racial in objective. Quadrennially, just after the presidential inauguration, another whose aim was national in outlook and application. Always deeply earnest in his effort at reforms, he was unsparing in condemnation of wrong doing, whether in the colored race or in the body politic. It was well known that my home church was St. Luke's, yet I never missed one of these special sermons, a few of which I shall include in this volume. They breathe uniformly a noble spirit of pious consecration and a yearning for oneness with the Master in closest fellowship and obedient following, openly revealing at the same time a primordial detestation of sham and uncompromising condemnation of all flaccidity or crookedness of moral conduct in high or low.

At one of those early conventions of Negro leaders, periodically held at Hampton years ago, a New England writer for the Outlook said: "These people are natural orators all, and Francis J. Grimke is the Savonarola of his race." More recently, a convention of National Youth Administration held in Richmond was told by a certain Negro Educator, if correctly reported in the Washington news, "Being good might get you to Heaven but it will not do a damn bit of good on earth. It has no more social significance than a good drink of liquor." Such flippant balderdash was, in Dr. Grimke's opinion, worse than any abstruse theological heresies and calculated in a more deadly and dangerous way to corrupt the youth of the Negro Race. It drew his fire in a strong letter to the head of the institution so ungraciously represented, and at the same time sent me the letter photographed on page 29A, dated Feb. 28, 1937. (Insert letter)

During this later period I seldom saw him. Lottie had gone, his brother Archibald, too, had died and the only daughter, Angelina, was living in New York. The home on Corcoran street, that I knew and loved so well, was broken up and left desolate. An occasional letter from him was all that was left of the old meeting ground. Naturally the Rich-

mond address already referred to called out a flash of the old fire, which decided me to give here the untouched stamp of his well known typewriter already grown feeble like its handler. But Francis J. Grimke could still pour out the vials of his wrath on corrupt leaders and, like the Hebrew prophets of old, utter vitriolic denunciation against unrighteous practices. For he was essentially a fighter; his mission was to "cry aloud and spare not" against the evils of his day, and he fought a good fight, he kept the faith. If he was a flaming sword to evil doers, he was just as unsparing in passing judgment on himself, just as unrelenting in squaring his performance by his profession.--

"Not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show you the steep and thorny way to Heaven
Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede."

In the world but not of it, socially genial, always kindly but reserved and strongly self-restrained, privately living the ascetic life of an anchorite while he gave freely of his substance to feed the poor, ready at all times to respond to the cry of distress, Dr. Grimke has left us a record unsullied by one suspicion of human pettiness and meanness, an example unsurpassed for purity and nobility of character, in a word, the ideal, Christian gentleman. The Grimkes both believed thoroly in plain living and high thinking and as a family practiced their belief. They gave conscientiously to public charity a mathematical tenth of their annual income, and were never wanting when opportunity offered for practical and efficient service in community betterment. He served many years without pay as chairman of trustees of the Colored Social Settlement in Washington, and one of the latest public appearances he was able to make after his health failed was to preside at the final meeting of that Board when it turned over the cash balance of the Settlement, some-

thing over $2,500, to the D. C. Community Chest to be kept at interest and administered for welfare work among colored people.

Never attracted by money-making schemes, never given what the slang of today calls a break, incapable of temperament and apathetic by choice toward rounding up the common herd that is essential to the successful political leader, no opportunist, no gambler for fortune's favors, he had at his death the simple, honest earnings of a frugal life which he bequeathed wisely and generously for the betterment of posterity. To bear the names of wife and mother, he endowed two perpetual scholarships at Lincoln University, his Alma Mater, the Nancy Weston Grimke and Charlotte Forten scholarships to assist worthy young men in forwarding their education. His library, a valuable collection on Art, literature, philosophy, Religion, he left to Howard University. This rare and priceless gift contains more than 2,200 volumes besides pamphlets, sermons, speeches, and several thousand clippings covering more than a half century of uncrystallized World History. Many of the books are autographed gifts to members of the Grimke family from some of the most distinguished names in American History, such as the poet Whittier, Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Garrison, Sumner, Phillips, and others. A Jowett translation of Plato presented by Dr. Buckley; a second edition of Esther Burr's Journal, edited by Dr. Rankin; a gift edition in Memory of Dr. Patton by his son, Rev. Cornelius Patton.

Of Mrs. Grimke's own literary work there is her translation of Madame Thérèse, a French novel published by Scribner's in 1869. There are two books by Archibald H. Grimke, the Life of Charles Sumner and the Life of William Lloyd Garrison in the American Reformers Series; also several poems and a play by Angelina, daughter of Archibald Grimke. The works of Frederick Grimke, 1871, also Thomas Smith Grimke, 1831. A special volume of addresses in memory of Angelina Grimke Weld delivered at her funeral at Hyde Park, Mass., 1879, and printed later for private circu-

lation, containing eulogies by Lucy Stone and Wendell Phillips; also sketches by Sarah Moore Grimke, autographed copies of the poems of Cordelia Ray, signed books by Lucy Larcom, Lillie Chace Wyman; a volume in Memory of Robert Gould Shaw presented to Mrs. Grimke by William Shaw; gift copies of Papers on Literature and Art; Woman in the 19th Century, by Margaret Fuller, Marchioness Ossoli; Roman Antiquities, 1814, by Alexander Adams, Rector of Edinburgh, inscribed "Francis J. Grimke, presented by his Aunt Angelina Grimke Weld." A veritable gold mine for those who have the mental equipment to work it, an inestimable inheritance for Negro youth with taste and talent to make use of it.

To Washington, the Nation's Capital, Dr. Grimke has bequeathed the memory of a long and faithful ministry to his fellowmen thro the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, which he served more than fifty years.

With this I conclude a chapter of precious memories,"living over again" an intimate association that could come to the public from no other source. If in these memoirs I have dwelt lovingly and long on his playtime rather than his work, it is not that I have less appreciation and profound admiration for the eminent divine than for the genial friend. The world had the sermons; if it can forget, so much the worse for the world. But a man is what he is when the World is not looking--in his home, in his leisure time, relaxed at play and released momentarily from the eternal MUST. And this must be my excuse for unlocking to gawping eyes the closest and most sacred privacies of a long and unbroken friendship. It is the thot and the hope that here a lesson may be learned by some who, because there are handicaps, are inclined to despair.of life's possibilities and of "God's occasions passing by." My thesis, if I have one, is "Life Can Be Beautiful." No need of a prophet to tell us it can be and often is sordid and ugly; but it can be beautiful. Life is earnest, life is real--as real as a steam roller. There is nothing transcendental about a steam roller, you cannot laugh it out of court, or jam its

monstrous bulk into the padded recesses of your night clubs or cabarets. Life is earnest, too, you don't wipe away its smudge with lipstick and mascara or drown its hurt by "rushing the growler." Rich or poor, lofty or lowly, courted or shunned, all, all sooner or later face its stern realities, and Francis J. Grimke was Captain of his soul. He made life beautiful by the way he lived it. Nor did it lack for him the fullest exhilaration and zest. He never joined the somber philosophers who complain that life is not worth living. He could never sympathize with those who would willfully end it all, even under circumstances of the most poignant suffering. To him life was a God-given opportunity for growth, for discipline, and preparation for a higher future existence; and so his pleasures as well as his tasks were made conducive to that end. Life's favors and its tribulations and anxieties, its trials and hardships, no less than its lure and glamour, the things that intensify ambition's urge by electrifying its goal, the lure that men sell their souls for--power, popular applause, riches, worldly comfort--all fell into their proper niche and were estimated by him at their true value. The time that others spend at ball games, bridge, whist, at the races, and on the golf links, in the movies or worse, debauching themselves in feeble and enfeebling attempts to stave off the inevitable by drowning the sensibilities and stifling the conscience, he gave to pleasures of the mind and play of the imagination. His leisure he devoted to those studies which, in the words of the old Roman philosopher, "Give food to nourish growth in the young, recreation to revitalize the jaded forces of old age;" they are an ornament to prosperity, a refuge and solace in adversity; when wanted in the night watches are right there, climb cheerfully and unobtrusively into the rumble seat on our tours, and are always ready at call for just plain rusticating."

That Dame Fortune gave me a share in these studies and these transcendent pleasures with the Grimke family I am devoutly thankful to the Giver of all good. The labor of love in compiling the account here

written is a tribute far too small to embody the precious memories of bygone days.

"And in the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since--and lost awhile."